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### EDUCATING AND TRAINING AUSTRALIA'S WORKERS

#### INTRODUCTION

Gaining a qualification for a predetermined career is not a guarantee of lifelong employment. To keep pace with a changing work environment (see **Australian Social Trends 1997**, 'Changing industries, changing jobs', pp. 93-98), and to help in both getting and keeping a job, many workers study for an educational qualification or participate in training at various times throughout their working lives. This training is often informal while on-the-job, but also includes more formal training, both in and outside of the workplace. Some workers choose to gain an initial or extra educational qualification through studying at a TAFE or business college, or at a university; others begin their studies after being retrenched or having decided on a career change (see **Australian Social Trends 1997**, 'Education and employment', pp. 84-87).

It is also in the interests of employers to have skilled workers. Many employers assist their staff to develop their skills by arranging training within the workplace or supporting employees to gain qualifications at an educational institution.

The 1997 Survey of Education and Training showed that 4 million wage and salary earners held a post-school qualification (54% of all wage and salary earners) - almost 2.1 million held a higher education qualification (28% of all wage and salary earners), and a further 1.8 million (24%) held a skilled or basic vocational qualification. Women were more likely than men to have a higher education qualification (32% compared to 24%), and less likely to have a vocational qualification (19% and 29%) (table S4.1).

#### S4.1 WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS, Level of Educational Attainment and Enrolment, Selected Years

	Higher education(a) %	Vocational qualification(b) %	All qualifications(c) %	Total '000
With post-school qualifications				
1989	n.a.	n.a.	47.3	6,704.7
1993	24.2	22.8	47.8	7,078.7
1997	27.8	24.4	53.9	7,419.6
Males	23.8	29	54.5	3,943.7
Females	32.3	19.2	53.1	3,475.9

Enrolled for post-school qualifications

1997	9.9	3.8	14.2	7,419.6
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(a) Comprises higher degree, postgraduate diploma, bachelor degree, undergraduate diploma or associate diploma.

(b) Skilled or basic.

(c) Includes persons whose level of post-school qualification was not stated or inadequately described.

Source: Unpublished data, 1997 Survey of Education and Training; Education and Training Experience, Australia, 1997 (6278.0).

## Recent education trends

The proportion of wage and salary earners who had a post-school qualification increased between 1989 and 1997 from 47% to 54%. Since 1993, the increase in proportions has been more substantial for those with a higher education qualification (from 24% to 28%), than for those with vocational qualifications (from 23% to 24%). The trend towards higher education qualifications looks set to continue, with more enrolments in higher education courses than in vocational courses. In 1997 there were just over one million workers enrolled for a post-school qualification. Over two-thirds of these were enrolled for a higher education qualification, and just over one-quarter for a vocational qualification - similar proportions to those for all students<sup>1</sup>. Some of these were full-time workers undertaking part-time study, such as apprentices or mature-age university students, and others were full-time students with a part-time job, such as young people studying at university.

The likelihood of workers undertaking studies, whether for a first or subsequent qualification, varied according to their occupation, partly because some occupations have requirements for formal qualifications while others do not. In general, those in more highly skilled occupations, for example professionals, were more likely to be involved in study or training courses, and to have received employer support, than those in less skilled occupations, such as labourers and related workers.

One in six workers (16%) had studied for a post-school qualification in 1996 - more commonly professionals (21%) and elementary clerical, sales and service workers (19%) (table S4.2). Of those who had studied, 61% of the elementary clerical, sales and service workers had studied for a bachelor degree or higher. This suggests that many of them were full-time university students working part-time in lower skilled jobs until they had completed their studies.

### S4.2 WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS, Study or Training Undertaken by Occupation - Selected Years

	Training(a)(b)				Total who did any study or training(c)	Total
	Studied for a post-school qualification	On-the-job	In-house	External		
	%	%	%	%	%	'000

Occupation in 1997

Managers and administrators	12.0	84.2	44	35.8	91.9	<b>350.6</b>
Professionals	20.9	89.6	52.2	35.7	95.4	<b>1,343.1</b>
Associate professionals	17.1	80.9	44.6	24.5	89.2	<b>695.5</b>
Tradespersons and related workers	18.0	70.9	25.5	16.4	80	<b>912.9</b>
Advanced clerical and service workers	14.4	77.2	31.9	19.6	84.1	<b>289.3</b>
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	15.5	75.1	35.8	17.9	84.8	<b>1,488.8</b>
Intermediate production and transport workers	7.8	58.2	24.2	10.8	68.9	<b>727.8</b>
Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	18.8	71.3	26.5	15.1	81.6	<b>778.3</b>
Labourers and related workers	9.1	58.6	15.8	10.9	69.1	<b>833.4</b>
Total in 1997	15.6	74.4	34.2	20.7	83.2	<b>7,419.6</b>
Total in 1993	18.6	81.8	31.3	11.8	85.8	<b>7,078.7</b>
Total in 1989	16.8	71.8	34.9	9.8	79	<b>6,704.7</b>

(a) In the 12 months prior to the relevant survey.

(b) On-the-job training undertaken, or in-house or external training courses completed.

(c) People may undertake more than one study or training course; therefore components may not add to total.

Source: Unpublished data, 1997 Survey of Education and Training; Education and Training Experience, Australia, 1997 (6278.0).

## Recent training

In addition to any formal qualifications they might have, many workers receive training while employed. This may be in-house or external training courses, or on-the-job training - the most common type. In 1997, 74% of workers had received on-the-job training during the previous 12 months - similar to the proportions in 1989 (72%), but lower than in 1993 (82%). Those in more highly skilled occupations, such as professionals, were most likely to have received on-the-job training (90%), and those in less skilled occupations, such as intermediate production and transport workers, the least likely (58%).

Participation in external training courses (those undertaken while not working or with other attendees working for a different employer) was less common, with one in five workers receiving this type of training in the previous 12 months (21%). However, this represented a strong increase in external training course participation since 1989, when the participation rate was 10%. It may partly reflect the trend towards outsourcing and contracting of many of the functions previously provided in-house. Levels of participation in in-house training courses were nevertheless similar in 1997 (34%) and 1989 (35%).

## Support for education and training

People enrolled to obtain a post-school qualification may support themselves during their studies,

but often obtain additional funding to pay for their education and living expenses. Of all workers enrolled in a post-school program of education in 1997, 24% received financial support from an employer, 18% from family and 16% from government (through payments such as AUSTUDY or the Youth Training Allowance).

Full-time study for a post-school qualification is more commonly undertaken by younger workers (78% were aged 15-24 years in 1997), who usually support themselves with part-time work and/or government and family assistance. Full-time students were generally more likely to receive support from family and from the government than part-time students. In 1997, 32% of workers studying full-time for a post-school qualification obtained support from the government and 39% from family members. On the other hand, students studying part-time, many of whom will have worked for some time, were more likely to have received support from employers (35%) (table S4.3).

Training for a skilled vocational qualification generally occurs while a student is employed in the field in which the qualification is being attained (often as apprentices or trainees). As a result, workers enrolled in these courses were much more likely to have received employer support (63%) than those enrolled for a bachelor degree (13%). Similarly, people undertaking post-graduate studies usually do so in order to progress further in their chosen career. These courses are generally undertaken by older workers (84% were aged 25 years or more), who were more likely to have received support from their employer (36%) than from other sources.

The 1997 Survey of Education and Training also found that those enrolled for a post-school qualification who received financial support from their employer were most likely to have received support in the form of fee payments (62%) or paid study leave (50%).

Workers can also improve their skills through undertaking training courses that are related to their employment. Employers are more likely to provide support for courses where the relevance to the skills their staff need is more obvious. Of the 1.5 million workers who undertook external training courses in the 12 months prior to the 1997 Survey, 59% (12% of all workers) received employer financial support.

#### **S4.3 WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS ENROLLED FOR POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION(a), Source of Financial Support(b) - 1997**

Source of Support	Study status			Level of qualification					Total(c)
	Full-time	Part-time	External	Higher degree and postgraduate diploma	Bachelor degree	Associate or undergraduate diploma	Skilled vocational	Basic vocational	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employer	5.6	35.0	32.5	35.7	12.6	17.0	63.0	25.4	23.7
Other(d)	67.1	13.8	14.6	23.2	48.7	27.7	21.9	26.8	33.5
Family members	39.3	5.8	4.5	6.6	31.0	13.9	12.4	8.8	17.9
Government	32.2	5.9	6.2	12.1	20.5	13.5	7.9	16.0	15.6
Did not receive support	29.1	55.6	57.3	48.3	40.0	56.8	51.9	52.5	46.2

Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Total	78.4	39.8	19.9	16.1	62.1	45.0	78.8	39.7	50.2

(a) Where more than one post-school qualification was enrolled for, details were collected about the most recent.

(b) People could report more than one type of financial support, therefore components may not add to total.

(c) Includes persons whose level of post-school qualification enrolled for was not stated or inadequately described.

(d) Comprises support from government, family members, union or professional organisations, other and not known.

Source: Unpublished data, 1997 Survey of Education and Training.

## Access to education and training

In general, actual or intended involvement in study for an educational qualification or in work-related training differs little between men and women, but decreases with increasing age. In 1997, 94% of workers aged 15-24 years had undertaken some study or training in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared to 73% of those aged 45 years and over. In contrast, the proportion of workers who received employer financial support for external training courses increased with age, up to the 35-44 age group.

Apart from the differences by age, certain groups of people, such as Indigenous Australians or those with a disability, can experience special difficulties in gaining access to education or training opportunities.

Indigenous Australians commonly have had lower levels of participation in post-compulsory education than the rest of the community (see **Australian Social Trends 1996**, 'The education of Indigenous people', pp. 75-78), and in 1997 this was reflected in the lower proportions of Indigenous workers with a post-school qualification (35%) compared to all workers (54%) (table S4.4). Indigenous workers, however, were just as likely as all workers to have undertaken some training or study in the 12 months prior to the 1997 survey (84% and 83% respectively). They were also more likely to be intending to enrol for a post-school qualification in the three years following the survey (22%) than all workers (16%). These results are, in part, affected by the younger age structure of Indigenous workers, with younger workers being more likely than older workers to participate in study or training courses.

Workers without post-school qualifications undertook less study or training courses than those with post-school qualifications (78% versus 88%), and received less employer support for external training courses (7% and 17% respectively). They were also less likely to intend to enrol than those who already held a post-school qualification (13% compared to 20%).

Overseas-born workers whose first language was not English were just as likely to have a post-school qualification as all workers (55% and 54% respectively). For workers who immigrated as adults, this reflects both the immigration selection process, which in part favours those with post-school educational qualifications, and also their older age profile compared to the Australian-born population, giving them more opportunity to have completed a qualification. Overseas-born workers whose first language was not English participated in in-house or external training courses (22% and 14% respectively), but not to the same extent as the general population of workers (34% and 21%). In association with this lower participation in training courses, a lower proportion of overseas-born workers (8%) received employer support for training than all workers (12%). It is

not clear whether the lower employer support for training courses is a cause or a consequence of the lower level of participation.

Having a disability did not seem to affect the level of training or education participation of workers, possibly because those who were able to find employment had lower levels of disability than those who were not able to get a job (see **Australian Social Trends 1997**, 'Employment of people with a handicap', pp. 104-108).

#### **S4.4 WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS, Indicators of Education and Training Experience and Intentions - 1997**

<b>Selected population groups</b>	<b>With post-school qualifications</b>	<b>Undertaken some study or training(a)</b>	<b>Had employer financial support for external training</b>	<b>Enrolled for post-school qual. but not completed(b)</b>	<b>Intends to enrol for post-school qual. (c)</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>'000</b>
Males	54.5	82.9	11.8	8.9	16.1	3,943.7
Females	53.1	83.5	12.6	10.2	16.7	3,475.9
Indigenous	34.6	84	* 9.1	15	21.9	71.1
With post-school qualifications	100.0	87.8	16.6	9.6	19.5	3,997.5
Without post-school qualifications	..	77.8	7.1	9.4	12.7	3 422.0
English not first language(d)	55.5	70.9	8	8.2	15.1	851
Persons with a disability	52.0	80.2	11.7	9.7	16.8	1,332.5
Persons aged 15–24 years	37.7	93.7	8	18.2	26.1	1,545.1
Persons aged 25–34 years	58.6	85.8	13.1	10.4	19	2,076.8
Persons aged 35–44 years	59.8	82.5	15.1	6.9	15.1	1,857.8
Persons aged 45–64 years	56.0	72.7	11.7	4.1	7.1	1,939.8
<b>All wage and salary earners</b>	<b>53.9</b>	<b>83.2</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>7,419.6</b>

(a) In the 12 months prior to the 1997 survey.

(b) In the last five years.

(c) In the next three years.

(d) For persons not born in Australia.

Source: Unpublished data, 1997 Survey of Education and Training; Education and Training Experience, Australia, 1997 (6278.0).

## Appendix

The main source of data for this review is the ABS Survey of Education and Training, a household survey conducted during the period March to May 1997. Some time series data are also provided from the 1993 and 1989 surveys of education and training.

Wage and salary earners (more commonly referred to as 'workers' in this review) are persons aged 15-64 years who had worked as wage and salary earners in the 12 months prior to the surveys (March to May 1997, April to May 1993, or March to July 1989). Persons aged 15-20 years and still at secondary school are excluded in this review.

Post-school education is defined as a course of study through an educational institution, since leaving school, for which an award is conferred upon completion.

Training courses are activities undertaken to obtain, maintain, or improve work-related skills, conducted at a designated time, in a structured format. On-the-job training, and study for an educational qualification, are excluded.

On-the-job training refers to activities undertaken to improve job skills, such as:

- asking questions of co-workers or colleagues;
- self teaching;
- being shown how to do the job; and
- watching others work.

A skilled vocational qualification requires two to four years' study and is for work in a higher skilled trade or craft. A basic vocational qualification requires one semester to one year's study for those wanting to work at the operative level in various fields (see **Australian Social Trends 1999**, 'Education - definitions and references', pp. 80-81).

## Endnote

- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics 1998, **Education and Training Experience, Australia, 1997** (6278.0).

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